

by the Government. They have tabled an amendment and we

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welcome that. The Church also welcomes it, but we will follow the amendment through all its Committee proceedings and on to the Floor of the House.

#### Church Repairs (VAT)

27. **Miss Anne McIntosh (Vale of York):** What recent representations he has received on the impact of VAT on church repairs. [94817]

**Second Church Estates Commissioner (Mr. Stuart Bell):** The Churches main committee and the Church of England's VAT group, having worked tremendously hard on the matter, continue to press for change with other Government Departments and with colleagues in Europe as the European Commission reviews the sixth VAT directive.

**Miss McIntosh :** The hon. Gentleman will be aware of my ongoing campaign in that regard. In the interim, until VAT is reduced, will he bring the regrettable administration in applying for grants to make up for the shortfall in VAT reduction to the attention of the Chancellor?

**Mr. Bell:** The Church appreciates the gesture made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in giving a derogation from payment of the full VAT on church repairs. He listened receptively to the concept that that should be continued in the next Budget. We appreciate his continued efforts on behalf of the Church until the sixth directive is properly revised.

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#### Iraq

3.30 pm

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair):** May I first tell the House that I have sent messages of condolence to President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon following the break-up of the Columbia space shuttle on Saturday? This was a tragedy not just for the seven astronauts and their families, but for their countries and all who value space exploration. I am sure that the whole House would want to join me in expressing our sadness and our sympathy.

With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on my visit to Washington.

In addition to Iraq, which I shall come to in a moment, President Bush and I discussed the middle east peace process, Afghanistan and global poverty and development. On the first, we agreed on the vital necessity of making progress based on the twin-state solution: Israel confident of its own security and a Palestinian state that is viable. I am convinced there is now a real wish across the world to push this process forward and I hope that we can take further

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steps on this issue soon. I believe it is of fundamental importance, not just to peace in the middle east, but to peace throughout the world.

But the immediate focus of the visit was Iraq. Over the past week, in addition to meeting President Bush, I have seen Prime Minister Aznar, President Mbeki, Prime Minister Berlusconi and Prince Saud. Today, I have spoken to President Chirac. After this statement, I will be speaking to President Putin, and I have also spoken to the Prime Ministers of Turkey, Canada, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Australia. I shall meet President Chirac tomorrow. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary is in regular contact with his opposite numbers from countries on the UN Security Council, in the European Union and in the middle east, and will be in New York for UN meetings later this week.

We are entering the final phase of a 12-year history of the disarmament of Iraq. The duty on Saddam to destroy all his weapons of mass destruction was a central part of the ceasefire agreement at the end of the Gulf war in 1991. In a series of 17 resolutions since then, the UN Security Council has put Saddam under 27 separate and categorical obligations to give full, final and complete declarations on its weapons programmes; to give inspectors unconditional and unrestricted access; to cease the concealment of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; and to co-operate fully with the inspectors in the disarmament of all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Saddam has consistently flouted these obligations. That is why a sanctions regime has been in place for years against Iraq which, because of the way in which Saddam has applied it, has caused wholly unnecessary suffering for the Iraqi people.

Last November, the UN Security Council concluded unanimously that Iraq was still, and I quote, "in material breach of UN resolutions." Saddam was given "a final opportunity" to comply with his disarmament obligations. Resolution 1441 imposed on Saddam a duty to give

"a currently accurate, full and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other delivery systems",

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to provide

"immediate, unimpeded, unrestricted and private access"

to all people the inspectors wish to interview,

"in the mode or location"

of the inspectors' choice; and also to co-operate actively and fully with all the inspectors' demands. Failure by Iraq at any time to comply with and co-operate fully in the implementation of the resolution was said in terms to constitute a further material breach.

Eight weeks have now passed since Saddam was given his final chance. Six

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hundred weeks have passed since he was given his first chance. The evidence of co-operation withheld is unmistakable. Saddam has still not answered the questions concerning thousands of missing munitions and tons of chemical and biological agents unaccounted for. Rocket warheads with chemical weapons capacity have been found by the inspectors: they should have been declared. Classified documents of relevance to Iraq's past nuclear programme have been discovered in a scientist's private house: they should have been handed over. Of the first 11 documents specifically requested by the inspectors, only three have been produced. Not a single interviewee has come to an appointment with the inspectors without their so-called official minders.

As the report we published at the weekend makes clear, and which I placed in the Library of the House, there is a huge infrastructure of deception and concealment designed to prevent the inspectors from doing their job. US Secretary of State Colin Powell will report further to the UN on this on Wednesday. As Dr. Blix, the UN Chief Inspector, reported last week:

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance—not even today—of the disarmament which was demanded of it "

He said that Iraq's declaration seemed to contain no new evidence; that there are indications that Iraq has weaponised the nerve agent VX, one of the most toxic ever developed, that there are strong indications that Iraq produced more anthrax than it has declared; and that the discovery of chemical rocket warheads could be, again I quote, "the tip of an iceberg".

The situation therefore could not be clearer. There is a duty on Saddam to co-operate fully. At present, he is not co-operating fully. Failure to do so is a material breach of resolution 1441. Should Dr. Blix continue to report Iraqi non-co-operation, a second resolution should be passed confirming such a material breach. President Bush and I agreed that we should seek maximum support for such a resolution, provided, as ever, that seeking such a resolution is a way of resolving the issue, not delaying or avoiding dealing with it at all. I continue to believe that the United Nations is the right way to proceed. There is integrity in the process set out in resolution 1441 and we should follow it.

We of course discussed the fact that weapons of mass destruction are not the only threat the world faces, and Iraq is not the only country posing a risk in respect of weapons of mass destruction. Over the past few weeks, we have seen powerful evidence of the continuing terrorist threat: the suspected ricin plot in London and Manchester; al-Qaeda experiments in Afghanistan to develop chemical, biological and radiological weapons; the arrests of those linked to al-Qaeda in Spain and France; and further arrests just a few days ago in Italy.

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What is more, many of these arrests show the terrorist groups actively seeking to use chemical or biological means to cause as much death and injury and suffering as they can. We know too from 11 September that these terrorists have no demands that could ever be negotiated upon, no constraint in terms of finance and numbers to carry out terrorist acts, and no compunction in taking human life.

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At the same time, we know that Iraq is not alone in developing weapons of mass destruction; there are unstable, fiercely repressive states either proliferating or trying to acquire WMD, like North Korea. I repeat my warning: unless we take a decisive stand now as an international community, it is only a matter of time before these threats come together. That means pursuing international terrorism across the world in all its forms. It means confronting nations defying the world over weapons of mass destruction. That is why a signal of weakness over Iraq is not only wrong in its own terms. Show weakness now and no one will ever believe us when we try to show strength in future. All our history, especially British history, points to this lesson. No one wants conflict. Even now, war could be avoided if Saddam did what he is supposed to do. But if, having made a demand backed up by a threat of force, we fail to enforce that demand, the result will not be peace or security. It will simply be returning to confront the issue again at a later time, with the world less stable, the will of the international community less certain, and those repressive states or terrorist groups that would destroy our way of life emboldened and undeterred.

Even now, I hope that conflict with Iraq can be avoided. Even now, I hope that Saddam can come to his senses, co-operate fully and disarm peacefully, as the UN has demanded. But if he does not—if he rejects the peaceful route—he must be disarmed by force. If we have to go down that route, we shall do all we can to minimise the risks to the people of Iraq, and we give an absolute undertaking to protect Iraq's territorial integrity. Our quarrel has never been with the Iraqi people, but with Saddam.

Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and the threats that they pose to the world must be confronted. In doing so, this country and our armed forces will be helping the long-term peace and security of Britain and the world.

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# MI6 and CIA: the new enemy within

By Paul Lashmar and Raymond Whitaker

Tony Blair and George Bush are encountering an unexpected obstacle in their campaign for war against Iraq - their own intelligence agencies. Britain and America's spies believe that they are being deceived, that the intelligence they provide is being selectively applied to lead to the opposite conclusion from the one they have drawn, which is that Iraq is much less of a threat than their political masters claim. Worse, when the intelligence agencies fail

to do the job, the politicians will not stop at plagiarism to make their case, even "tweaking" the plagiarised material to ensure a better fit. "You cannot just cherry-pick evidence that suits your cause and ignore the rest. It is a cardinal rule of intelligence," said one aggrieved officer. "Yet that is what the PM is doing." Not since Harold Wilson has a Prime Minister been so unpopular with his top spies. The mounting tension is mirrored in Washington. "We've gone from a zero position, where presidents refused to cite detailed intel as a source, to the point now a partisan material is officially attributed to these agencies," said one US intelligence source. Mr Blair is facing an unprecedented, if covert, rebellion by his top spies, who last week used the politicians's own weapon - the strategic leak - against him. The BBC received a Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) document which showed that British intelligence believes there are no current links between the Iraqi regime and the al-Qaida network. The document, written last month, said there had been contact between the two, but it assessed that any fledgling relationship founded due to mistrust and incompatible ideologies. That conclusion contradicts one of the main charges laid against Saddam Hussein by the United States and Britain, most notably in Wednesday's speech by the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to the UN Security Council, that he has cultivated contacts with the group blamed for the 11 September attacks.

Such a leak of sensitive material reveals the depth of anger within Britain's spy community over the misuse of intelligence by Downing Street. A DIS document like this is highly secret. Whoever leaked it must have been quite senior and had unofficial approval from within the highest levels of British intelligence," said one insider. In response the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, tried to play down the importance of the DIS, which he repeatedly called the Defence Intelligence Services.

No sooner had that embarrassment passed, however, than it emerged that large chunks of the Government's latest dossier on Iraq which claimed to draw on "intelligence material", were taken from published academic articles, some several years old. It was this revealed material that General Powell held up in front of a worldwide audience, saying "I would call my colleagues' attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributes which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities".

Now Glen Bangwana, the Cambridge University analyst who blew the whistle on the plagiarism has pointed out the deception did not end there

He showed that the young Downing Street team led by Alison Blackshaw, Alastair Campbell's personal assistant, which put the document together had "hardened" the language in several places (see box).

How selectively the work of the intelligence agencies is being used on both sides of the Atlantic is shown by a revealing clash between Senator Bob Graham and the Bush administration's top intelligence advisers. Mr Graham, a Democrat, is chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Last July, baffled by the

apparently contradictory assessments on Iraq by America's 13 intelligence agencies, he asked for a report to be drawn up by the CIA that estimated the likelihood of Saddam Hussein using weapons of mass destruction.

The CIA procrastinated but finally produced a report after Senator Graham threatened to accuse them of obstruction. The conclusions were so significant that he immediately asked for it to be declassified. The CIA concluded that the likelihood of Saddam Hussein using such weapons was "very low" for the "fore-

seeable future". The only circumstances in which Iraq would be more likely to use chemical weapons or encourage terrorist attacks would be if it was attacked. After more arguments the CIA partly declassified the report. Senator Graham noted that the parts released were those that made the case for

war with Iraq. Those that did not were withheld. He appealed, and the extra material was eventually released. Yet the report has largely been ignored by the US media.

And reports last night called into doubt General Powell's description last week of a camp in northern Iraq as a terrorist, poison and



Jack Straw: tried to play down intelligence agency's leak

explosives training center that linked Baghdad to al-Qaida. Western journalists who visited the site yesterday found a half-built timber-block compound filled with heavy equipment and children - but no obvious sign of chemical weapons manufacturing.

Ansar al-Islam, the Islamic militant group that controls the camp which is believed to have ties to al-Qaida, said the camp serves as its administrative office, living quarters and a propaganda studio. The visit was arranged by a moderate Muslim organization which has good relations with Ansar al-Islam.

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## The doctored dossier

A British government dossier, "Iraq - its infrastructure of concealment, deception and intimidation" was largely copied - complete with poor punctuation and grammar - from an article in last September's *Middle East Review of International Affairs* and two articles in *Jane's Intelligence Review*.

But the Downing Street compilers also rounded up the numbers and inserted stronger language than in the original. In a section on a movement called Fedayean Saddam, members are according to the original 'recruited from regions loyal to Saddam'. The Government dossier says they are 'press-ganged from regions known to be loyal to Saddam'.

On Fedayean Saddam's total membership, the original says 18,000 to 40,000. The dossier says 30,000 to 40,000.

As similar burning-up of figures occurs with the description of the Directorate of Military Intelligence.

Included among the duties of the secret police, the Mukhabarat says the original are "monitoring foreign embassies in Iraq" and "aiding opposition groups in hostile regimes". The dossier says the duties include "spying on foreign embassies in Iraq" and "supporting terrorist organisations in hostile regimes".

The plagiarists cannot even copy correctly, confusing two organisations called General Security and Military Security. This means that the dossier says Military Security was created in 1992 then refers to it moving to new headquarters in 1990. The head of Military Security in 1997 is named as Taha al-Ahbab, when he was actually in charge of General Security.

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MENZIES CAMPBELL DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

# The former champion athlete, determined to slow the sprint towards war in Iraq

MENZIES CAMPBELL moves gingerly out of his sitting room so not to disturb his wife Elspeth's enjoyment of *Coronation Street*. Elspeth, the aristocratic daughter of a major-general, is an unlikely authority on Britain's longest-running soap opera. She gained a first-class degree from the Open University after writing a thesis on the programme.

"I'll tell you what *Coronation Street* is about. It's all about strong women. The men are all wings," Mr Campbell says.

This is an unexpected foray into popular culture from "Ming" Campbell who, as the Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs spokesman, is better known for sober commentary on arms proliferation.

One of Parliament's most authoritative voices on world issues, Mr Campbell, 61, cuts an urbane, patrician figure in the Commons and has just been elected deputy leader of the party by his fellow MPs.

His decision to take on yet more responsibilities has surprised some, not least because he is recovering from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a serious form of cancer which attacked his hip and has led to months of debilitating chemotherapy. He still has a course of radiotherapy to come.

But Mr Campbell, MP for North East Fife since 1987, says he would not have run for the deputy leadership if he did not think he was up to it. "The treatment has been successful," he says. "The doctors are extremely pleased and I am going to have some radiotherapy as an insurance."

The cancer was discovered by chance last autumn after leg pain caused Mr Campbell to start limping. "I thought I needed a hip replacement, and the surgeon made a proper investigation and discovered it was a tumour," he says. When news of his illness emerged, he received hundreds of letters of support. Colleagues were amazed to see him pop up on frequent television interviews.

"I successfully had the last [chemotherapy session] last week," he says. "All the indications are that the bone has regenerated and is very much better than anyone had expected. I am very lucky."

Mr Campbell's track record is an indication of his staying power. At Glasgow University,

BY MARIE WOOLF  
Chief Political Correspondent

a strike on Iraq without Nato or UN consensus would be "an enormous gamble", Mr Campbell says, adding "He would be gambling everything on total and speedy success".

The Scot - who for many years has been a member of the UK's delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly, Nato's Parliamentary Forum - warns that a war with Saddam Hussein may not be speedy or simple. If President Saddam was cornered, he might launch chemical or biological attacks against neighbouring nations such as Israel.

Moreover, the Iraqi Republican guard could prove a stubborn adversary, Mr Campbell says. "The lesson of 12 years ago was that the ordinary troops, the militia, the home guard if you like, won't even get in the way. They won't even put up roadblocks. They will be throwing away their weapons and hiding. If the conscripts behave in the same way they behaved in the Gulf war, they will be queuing up to surrender."

"But it's the hard core who know that if they were to surrender there would be an investigation into their actions who could be expected to fight."

He remains hopeful that war can still be averted. It is not yet a foregone conclusion, he says, and the United Nations weapons inspectors must be allowed more time to complete their task. He has great respect for Hans Blix, the chief weapons inspector, who has managed to thwart attempts by the right-wing in the United States to undermine him.

But Mr Campbell, who displays a lawyer's exactitude in picking apart a case, is sceptical about some "evidence" presented by ministers on Iraq. Not only was the use of a student thesis in an intelligence dossier foolhardy, but information provided by the British security services may have been selectively edited, he says.

"There's no doubt that the intelligence services have been very, very concerned about what they see as the misuse of information, in the sense that they believe the Government is inclined to use what supports the Government's political case without taking full account of the qualifications attached to such information, which is a

where he studied law alongside Donald Dewar, the former Scottish secretary and first minister, he became president of the union. He also excelled in athletics and between 1967 and 1974 was Britain's fastest man, holding the UK 100m record. He competed for Britain at the Olympics and Commonwealth games and captained the UK athletics team.

These days, Mr Campbell's focus is on Iraq, and how to slow the sprint towards war. The Liberal Democrat's foremost Commons statesman has been called the "most sensible" voice in Parliament on the war, and as a robust supporter of military action in Kosovo and Afghanistan he has more credibility than many other critics of the Government. "Before force can be justified as a last resort, you have to be satisfied that you have exhausted every other political or diplomatic alternative," he says.

Mr Campbell believes Saturday's million-strong protest against the war makes it more difficult for Tony Blair to pursue military action. But he does not doubt the sincerity of the Prime Minister's position and is scathing about those who accuse Mr Blair of being President George Bush's "poodle".

He says "in my view, that language fails to take proper account of the fact that the Prime Minister, for whatever reason, really believes in the course of action he is engaged in. I know him well enough to believe this is his independent judgement."

But for Mr Blair to "go it alone" with Mr Bush and back

necessary part of intelligence assessment," he says.

"Occasionally you get clear-cut intelligence assessment, but very often it's got to be a question of inference, and you have to put in qualifications saying this is a source we rely upon, or a doubtful source."

Mr Campbell's Savile Row suits and smart Edinburgh tones give him the aura of an establishment figure. But in contrast to his hero, the post-war Liberal leader Jo Grimond, he is more radical than his image and is strong on social justice and human rights.

There were many who hoped he would run against the leader of the Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy. But these days Mr Campbell is a loyal supporter of Mr Kennedy and says he no longer thinks of leading the party.

The late John Smith, while leader of the Labour Party, often tried to persuade Mr Campbell, a close friend of his, to defect. "In the early hours of the morning, with a glass of malt whisky in his hands, John Smith always used to tackle me in robust terms about why I was not a member of the Labour Party," he says. "While there was still a Tory government there was the occasional sniffing of the air in my direction, but this is not a Liberal."

And there was talk, when a coalition government was discussed by the former Liberal Democrat party leader Paddy Ashdown and Mr Blair, of giving "Ming" a cabinet position. But the 1997 Labour landslide made a pact unnecessary. Even

so, his stature was recognised by Labour when he was made one of the few Liberal Democrat Privy Counsellors as a mark of the respect he commands in the Commons.

In the next few months, he is planning a steadier pace to allow him to recover from his illness. But friends believe the former champion sprinter will not be slowed down for long. He enjoys the cut and thrust of political debate too much. "It's a kind of cliché to say I love all of it," he says, "but I do enjoy the battle of ideas."

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